



U-19s face Aus to book last 8 spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 will face their Australian counterparts in the ICC U-19 World Cup in Abu Dhabi today. The junior Tigers, who won their first two games and currently top the group with four points, will need to win the match to confirm a spot in the quarterfinals.

Australia, who beat Namibia but lost to Afghanistan on Monday, are currently second with two points. Afghanistan, who face Namibia today, also have two points but are placed third by virtue of net run rate.

The only way Bangladesh can be eliminated is if they lose to Australia and Afghanistan beat Namibia by a huge margin. While the probability of such an event occurring seems unlikely, Bangladesh U-19s did bow out of the Asia Cup last year in a similar manner after they lost to Sri Lanka in the final game. Afghanistan, apart from beating Sri Lanka, defeated Malaysia within four overs in the last game and went through with a better run-rate.

Liza regains chess title

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WIM Shamima Akter Liza regained the title of the National Women Chess Championship when she beat Mahmuda Hoque Chowdhury Moly in the eleventh and final round of the 34th edition at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

Liza, who was a champion from 2005 and 2010, earned nine points from 11 matches, half a point ahead of WFM Nazrana Khan Eva who had to be content as an unbeaten runner-up as her only national title came in 2000.

Eva drew against Tanima Parveen in the final round to earn 8.5 points while 17-time champion Rani Hamid became third beating Zakia Sultana in tie-breaking play-off match after both earned eight points each.

Defending champion Sharmin Sultana Shirin finished fifth with 7.5 points while WFM Tanima Parveen became sixth with seven points.

BracNet BFF's ISP partner

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BracNet became the official Internet Service Providers (ISP) of the Bangladesh Football Federation for six months, it was declared at a press conference yesterday.

BFF's senior vice president Abdus Salam Murshedy and BracNet CEO Major General (rtd) Syeed Ahmed signed the deal on behalf of their respective organisations at the BFF House. As per the deal, BracNet will provide internet connectivity at the BFF House, at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur, MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong, Sheikh Moni Stadium in Gopalganj, Bhasha Shahid Salam Stadium in Feni during the league matches held at these venues.

Time to confront hard questions

BISHWAJIT ROY



Bangladesh have probably already taken all the possible steps to demoralise themselves in this series. Rarely has so many close contests been played in a row with the same team repeatedly squandering the chances.

This team has a record of bouncing back from poor showings and one does not need to go too far back to find examples; a case in point is their performance in the second Test against Sri Lanka, where lots of issues were addressed in the drawn match after a below-par showing in the first Test at Mirpur.

Even so, it seems a tough ask for Mushfiquur Rahim's men to finish the series with some solace when they play the last two ODIs, especially after the shocking defeat in the first match.

Many have been searching for an answer about how a team could lose a match from such an advantageous position. But the team think-thank must find the answer.

If there is a question of lack of responsibility then the team management must come down hard on the players and momentarily abandon the policy of showing respect to 'international players'. If there was a problem with the captaincy then they must make it clear to the little man that he has to show courage and cricketing intelligence when the initiative is there to be seized.

The team management has to impress upon the players how important every match is in the current free-market

cricketing climate where Bangladesh have to constantly prove themselves for long-term prosperity. No one will remember if the match was lost by 13 or 130 runs -- all that will register is a defeat, which will hurt the legitimacy of the country's claim for more international cricket.

Bad luck may be an excuse -- although a poor one -- for the two close defeats in the T20I matches but how can one accept the defeat in the first ODI? Was there a semblance of a plan?

Just a look at one incident suggests that there was not. Sri Lanka suddenly brought a short leg fielder as Mahmudullah Riyad came in to bat, knowing his tendency of playing the ball with the turn to the leg side and the batsman generously obliged.

Whereas Bangladesh skipper Mushfiquur made one mistake after another when rotating his bowlers, thus allowing Sri Lanka to recover from 67 for eight to post 180, the batting effort that followed was simply pathetic including the captain himself, who is considered a technically sound and cool customer in the middle.

But in the first place, was there any plan to shape a proper playing eleven? Why was Naeem Islam left out after a very impressive show in just the previous series? Bangladesh must grow out of the mindless policy of considering a player focusing only on his recent form -- whatever the format. Surely the little recovery act that Riyad performed in the T20 series was not enough to snatch Naeem's place.

So there have been a lot of issues the home management need to address boldly and it would be foolish to blame luck only for failures, especially ahead of



While the Tigers opted to stay indoors, the Sri Lankans enjoyed the glorious sunshine at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, a day after their great Houdini act in the first one-dayer on Monday.

PHOTO: STAR

'Pressure forced the victory'

SPORTS REPORTER

There's not much that a team's head coach can say when his side goes on to lose a match after reducing the opposition to 67 for eight. It was the kind of match that Shane Jurgensen would never want to look back upon in the near future.

The recovery route for the Bangladeshis in this series after the 'hiccup', as put by Jurgensen, will no doubt be difficult. According to the coach, all they can do right now is move on and concentrate on the game tomorrow.

"I think it's frustrating and disappointing for everyone. We unfortunately had a hiccup. I thought we bowled and fielded well until the last two wickets. We need to take this as a learning opportunity and bounce back in the next game," Jurgensen told reporters at the team hotel yesterday.

The coach, who has had a positive run with the team before this series, admitted going through a slightly more challenging phase in his career as Bangladesh coach.

"It certainly is a challenge. As a coach you look at the mirror everyday and make sure you are doing the right things. The guys are working hard. We know that we will have a good result if we execute in the three fields," said Jurgensen.

"It's about the right process. Everyone

needs to stay patient with us. As of now we need to win the next game and take it down to the decider," he added.

Sri Lanka coach Paul Farbrace, who has been on the winning side of all the nail-biting contests, share's Jurgensen's sentiment and believes that all Bangladesh need is to cross the finish line once to regain their confidence.

"When you win a couple of games, you take confidence from that. I think Bangladesh are close to winning games. The T20 series and last night's game could have gone either way. I don't think they lack belief. It is just about winning a close game. They will be off and running from there," said Farbrace.

Farbrace was over the moon after the visitors scraped a win on Monday and described it as a 'magnificent' victory.

"I think yesterday the heart and the fight won us the game. You also need a bit of luck to go your way. There are small margins in international cricket. Winning close games is important, because it shows the fight and determination in the team," he said.

"The great thing was that from 110-2, I was very impressed how the boys fought, stuck at it, caught well and were disciplined in their bowling. The pressure forced the victory," he added.



New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum salutes the Basin Reserve crowd at Wellington after completing his triple hundred, the first by a New Zealand batsman, against India on the fifth and final day of the second Test yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

McCULLUM rewrites Kiwi history

AFP, Wellington



Test series win against India.

The captain, carrying back and shoulder injuries, batted for nearly 13 hours for his 302 which united the country in praise and put him in the company of legends Don Bradman and Wally Hammond.

Wellington's Basin Reserve erupted as McCullum cut Zaheer Khan for four to bring up the triple century, and the applause resumed just two balls later when he was out caught behind.

McCullum admitted to jangling nerves towards the end of his record knock which straddled three days' play and guaranteed a draw in the second Test, and a 1-0 series win for New Zealand.

"I wasn't too bad till I saw the size of the crowd then every ball that I defended, left or got a single they would start cheering and it made me a little bit more nervous," he said.

"That's probably when I understood the

SLC backs ICC revamp unanimously

CRICINFO, Colombo

Sri Lanka Cricket's Executive Committee has made a unanimous decision to support the governance, finance and FTP changes in the ICC, which were proposed by the BCCI, ECB and CA, at its meeting on February 17. SLC had refrained from voting on the revised proposals at the ICC Board meeting in Singapore, saying it needed more time to discuss them.

"The Executive Committee met today at SLC headquarters to converse regarding the revised resolutions forwarded by the ICC at the ICC Board meeting held on February 8 in Singapore," the SLC said.

"Subsequent to the committee members assessing the revised resolutions in detail, all members were satisfied with the amendments made in the areas of governance and competition models and thus unanimously decided to support the paper."

magnitude of the task at hand and the immense joy it gives fans of this cricket team to see guys succeed and see records broken.

"It was a moment when 300 came up and the applause was ongoing for quite a while. That's really when it hit home to me that it was quite a significant achievement for a New Zealander and I'll certainly remember them for the rest of my life."

McCullum's 302 surpassed Martin Crowe's 299 -- compiled at the same ground in 1991 -- to become the highest score by a New Zealander in 391 Tests since 1930.

After his 224 in the first-Test win, it made him just the third man after Australia's Bradman, and England's Hammond in the 1930s, to score double and triple tons in consecutive Tests.

"I'm very respectful of all the guys I managed to get past today, Martin Crowe in particular who's held the record for over 20 years," said McCullum.

"I almost feel a little embarrassed to go past someone of that calibre, and Stephen Fleming and all the other names as well."

"It's incredibly humbling to put your name up there and score the first triple century for New Zealand."

Moin sure of defending title

AFP, Lahore



Newly appointed Pakistan cricket coach Moin Khan Tuesday urged his players to shrug off "the fear of failure" as they prepare to defend the Asia Cup which starts later this month.

Pakistan began a four-day training camp ahead of the competition which starts in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka on February 25.

Khan, who replaced Australian Dav Whatmore under whom Pakistan won the Asia Cup in 2012, said the team was gearing up for the title defence.

"I hope we will give a good result and defend our title which we won with the same captain, Misbah-ul Haq," he told reporters after the first day of the camp.

Pakistan face Sri Lanka on the opening day of the tournament, which also includes India and Afghanistan.

"I think it's important to take out the fear of failure, which I saw previously in the team," said Khan.

He was manager of the team on the last tour to the United Arab Emirates, where Pakistan beat Sri Lanka in the one-day series 3-2 and squared the three-match Test series 1-1.

"It (being manager) was a different role but I have benefited from it as I have seen the technical problems of the players, got to know their psyche as well," said Khan.

He has been appointed as coach for the Asia Cup and the World Twenty20, also in Bangladesh in March-April.

"I am confident that if my performance is good I will get an extension," said Khan, under whose captaincy Pakistan won their first Asia Cup title in 2000.

BRENDON'S records

► McCullum is the first New Zealand batsman to score a triple-century (302) in Tests. He went past Martin Crowe's 299 against Sri Lanka at the same venue 20 years ago.

► Only 24 cricketers have broken the 300 barrier, four of them twice -- including West Indian Brian Lara, who holds the world record for the highest Test innings of 400.

► After his 224 in the first-Test win, McCullum became the third man after Australia's Donald Bradman, and England's Wally Hammond in the 1930s, to score double and triple tons in consecutive Tests.

► McCullum became only the second batsman in Test history to make a triple-century in the second innings after Pakistan's Hanif Mohammad's 337 against West Indies at Barbados in 1957-58.

► McCullum is only the eighth captain to hit a triple hundred in Tests. The last one to do it was Michael Clarke, who scored an unbeaten 329 against India at the SCG in 2012.

► McCullum's innings lasted 775 minutes, the eighth-longest innings in Test history. Hanif Mohammad tops the list for batting an estimated 970 minutes in the Barbados Test.

► New Zealand's score of 680 for 8 is the highest by any team in the second innings of a Test. They beat their own record of 671 against Sri Lanka at the same venue in 1990-91.

On way to his dream triple,

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand: First innings 192 (Williamson 47; I Sharma 6-51, Shami 4-70)

INDIA: First innings 438 (Rahane 118, Dhawan 98, Dhoni 68; Southey 3-93, Boult 3-99, Wagner 3-106)

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings (overnight 571-6)

| | |
|--|-----|
| Fulton lbw Zaheer | 1 |
| Rutherford c Dhoni b Zaheer | 35 |
| Williamson c Dhoni b Zaheer | 7 |
| Latham c Dhoni b Shami | 29 |
| McCullum c Dhoni b Zaheer | 302 |
| Anderson c & b Jadeja | 2 |
| Watling lbw Shami | 124 |
| Neesham not out | 137 |
| Southey c Pujara b Zaheer | 11 |
| Wagner not out | 2 |
| Extras: (b-9, lb-12, w-2, nb-7) | 30 |
| Total: (For 8 wickets in 210 overs) 680 | |
| Did not bat: Boult. | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-27, 3-52, 4-87, 5-94, 6-446, 7-625, 8-639. | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|----------|----|----|-----|---|
| I Sharma | 45 | 4 | 164 | 0 |
| Zaheer | 51 | 13 | 170 | 5 |
| Shami | 43 | 6 | 149 | 2 |
| Jadeja | 52 | 11 | 115 | 1 |
| R Sharma | 11 | 0 | 40 | 0 |
| Kohli | 6 | 1 | 13 | 0 |
| Dhoni | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Dhawan | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| INDIA: Second innings | |
| Vijay c Anderson b Southey | 7 |
| Dhawan lbw Boult | 2 |
| Pujara c Watling b Southey | 17 |
| Kohli not out | 105 |
| R Sharma not out | 31 |
| Extras: (w-2, nb-2) | 4 |
| Total: (For 3 wickets 52 overs) | 166 |
| Did not bat: Rahane, Dhoni, Jadeja, Shami, Zaheer, I Sharma. | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-10, 3-54. | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|---|----|---|----|---|
| Boult | 16 | 5 | 47 | 1 |
| Southey | 16 | 3 | 50 | 2 |
| Wagner | 11 | 3 | 38 | 0 |
| Neesham | 5 | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| Anderson | 4 | 1 | 6 | 0 |
| Result: Match drawn and New Zealand won two-match Test | | | | |